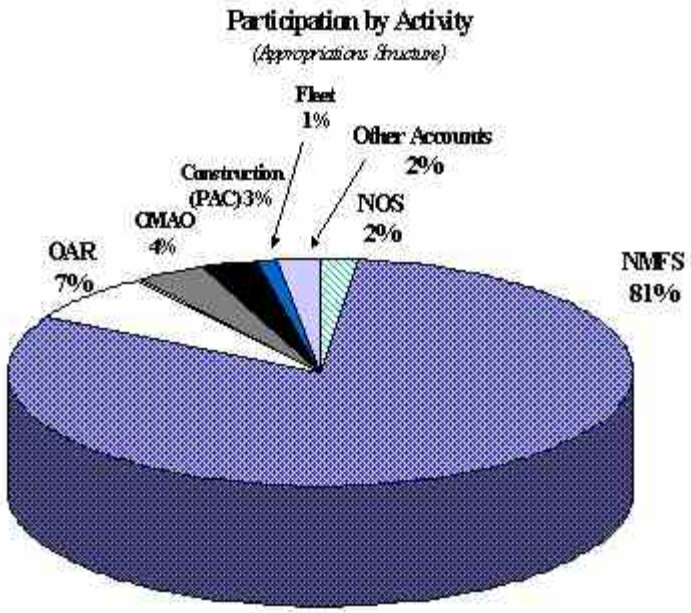


Build Sustainable Fisheries

Total Request: $533,778,000



Vision - NOAA's vision for the next decade is to greatly increase the Nation's wealth and quality of life through sustainable fisheries that support fishing industry jobs, provide safe and wholesome seafood, and ensure recreational fishing opportunities.

Challenge - Billions of dollars in economic growth, thousands of jobs and countless recreational fishing opportunities are not realized as a result of overfishing and overcapitalization in commercial and recreational fisheries. While many fisheries are well managed and are producing positive benefits, others are severely depleted, and must be restored to realize their long-term potential. Transboundary resources can be especially vulnerable as they require international cooperation to achieve effective conservation and management. Bycatch of non-target species, including juveniles and protected marine species, the controversial allocation decisions among elements of fishing industries, and the degradation and loss of essential fish habitat are serious problems effecting U.S. fisheries. In order to meet the growing domestic and global demand for seafood, and in light of the growing number of wild stocks that are over fished or fully utilized, it is important for the Nation to develop marine aquaculture, and to do so in an environmentally sound manner.

Implementation Strategy - The objectives of this strategic planning goal are to:

- eliminate and prevent overfishing and overcapitalization - by assessing the status of fishery resources, advancing fishery predictions, managing for economic growth in the fishing industry and ensuring adequate and voluntary compliance with fishery regulations;
- attain economic sustainability in fishing communities - by providing research and services for fishery-dependent industries and maximizing benefits from marine resources; and

- develop environmentally and economically sound marine aquaculture - by supporting aquaculture research and development and ensuring responsible industry practices.

Benefits - Rebuilding over exploited fish stocks by eliminating overfishing, protecting and improving fish habitat, and improving the economics of fisheries by reducing overcapitilization, are the key elements in a transition to sustainable fisheries. These activities will result in a more viable and competitive U.S. fishing industry, which in turn will lead to economic and social improvement in fisheries-dependent communities. Along with economic gains and the rebuilding of living marine resources, improved fisheries management and conservation will enhance recreational opportunities and save lives by eliminating the dangerous and wasteful race for the fish. By developing environmentally sound aquaculture, seafood supplies can be supplemented with high quality and reliable products without contributing to overfishing of wild populations or other negative impacts on coastal ecosystems.

FY 2000 Accomplishments

During FY 2000, NOAA continued to provide national leadership to maintain and improve the health of the Nation's fisheries. The following are the year's highlights:

NOAA continues to conduct research to advance fishery predictions, reduce costs of conventional stock assessments, develop advanced remote sensing techniques, improve fishery habitat and promote environmentally sound aquaculture. Through significant regulations (e.g., fish harvesting quotas and closures of fishery areas) NOAA has slowed and/or stopped overutilization of federally managed fisheries. In the future, progress will be focused on rebuilding stocks. Progress was made in defining and identifying possible quantitative methods of measuring fishing capacity. A preliminary report to assess capacity levels in some federally managed fisheries is being completed. These are critical steps in resolving overfishing, and improving the environmental and economic reviews to assist the decision making process.

The American Fisheries Act has been implemented dramatically restructuring of the Alaska pollock fishery. All of the necessary steps were completed in time for the start of the fishing season, resulting in a slower, more profitable harvest.

NOAA Fisheries issued regulations to implement Amendment 8 to the Northern Anchovy Fishery Management Plan (FMP) for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) off Washington, Oregon, and California. The amendment constitutes a major revamping of the FMP and implements proactive conservation measures by establishing a limited entry program to curtail anticipated increases in harvesting California sardine and Pacific mackerel.

A new monkfish management plan was approved in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions which is intended to stop overfishing and rebuild the monkfish stock. This rule limits capacity, establishes catch

and effort controls, creates a framework adjustment process, and establishes permitting and reporting requirements.

By investing a new state-of-the-art- research vessels, NOAA will be able to conduct essential stock assessment surveys, better monitor fish and marine mammal species, assess ecological changes, and provide the best available data to rebuild sustainable fisheries.

NOAA has completed agreements with all 20 coastal Districts of the Army Corps of Engineers, as well as regional offices of a number of other federal regulatory and construction agencies, to provide efficient ways for agencies to consult with NOAA and minimize adverse effect of their actions on essential fish habitat (EFH). NOAA has conducted over 10,000 EFH consultations resulting in recommendations to help conserve essential fish habitats for commercially and recreationally important species.

NOAA also developed guidelines regarding aquaculture developments and began the process of developing a Code of Conduct for Responsible Marine Aquaculture.

Key FY 2002 Activities

- Improve and expand stock assessments and prediction through increased fish stock surveys, including marine mammal stock assessments.

- Implement the NMFS Stock Assessment Improvement Plan (SAIP). This plan represents an investment in science program infrastructure and key staff resources to ensure state-of-the-art assessments for core species, adequate baseline monitoring of all Federally-managed species, and remedial data collection efforts.

- Investigate basin-wide changes in atmospheric and oceanic circulation and their effects on marine populations. FATE's (Fisheries and the Environment) goal is to develop biological and physical indicators of major changes in the ocean climate regime (i.e., regime shifts) that affects fisheries and other ecosystem components.

- Continue implementation of the national fisheries information system. The proposed system would improve the accuracy and effectiveness of existing data collection programs by establishing common data collection, information technology, and quality standards for regional programs, and integrating the results into a unified Web-enabled information system.

- Initiate new economics and statistics activities in cooperation with recreational and commercial fishing participants, state fishery agencies, interstate commissions, fishery management councils, fishing communities, and regional fisheries network.

- Provide increased observer coverage in previously unobserved fisheries or increase coverage to provide improved statistical validity. This program will improve the quality of data and provide a sound basis for management decision while capitalizing on technology enhancements that will decrease costs and improve efficiency.

- Promote public and private sector aquaculture which includes funding for research to develop environmentally sound marine aquaculture.

Key Performance Measures

	1997 act.	1998 act.	1999 est.	2000 est.	2001*	2002*
% of SFA requirements met	N/A	N/A	20	40	N/A	N/A
% of stocks assessed (of 201 identified)	79	79	79	80	N/A	N/A
% completion of information technology procurement/operations	85	90	95	100	N/A	N/A
# Fishery Management Plans with access controls implemented (of 39 FMPs)	25	23	27	30	N/A	N/A
# of fleets using vessel monitoring systems for spatial/temporal regulations	3	3	5	6	N/A	N/A

* To be replaced by new measures.

Key Performance Measures (New)

	1997	1998	1999 act.	2000 act.	2001 est.	2002 est.
By 2005, 25% (86 of 279) fewer over fished fisheries (stocks subject to overfishing)	N/A	N/A	-4%	-7%	1%	6%
By 2005, 20% fewer overcapitalized fisheries (economic and social aspect)	N/A	N/A	0	1%	3%	3%
By 2005, 60% of stocks have sufficient "essential fish habitat"	N/A	N/A	N/A	10%	40%	40%
By 2005, 9% increase in employment in non-capture fishing and/or other sectors	N/A	N/A	0	1%	2%	2%
By 2005, 20% of communities impacted by limited/closed fisheries are economically improved	N/A	N/A	0	1%	3%	3%
By 2005, 17% increase in economic contribution of aquaculture to Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	N/A	N/A	0	2%	4%	4%
By 2005, 100% of aquaculture operations are in compliance with code of responsible aquaculture practice	N/A	N/A	0	N/A [A]	15%	100%

A. Although several companies applied for permits, there were no aquaculture operations in federal waters in FY 2000.